

March 30, 2011

Dear Senator Toni Harp,

My name is Benjamin Bowen and I am a sophomore at Glastonbury High School in Glastonbury, Connecticut. I live in Hartford, CT and I attend the regional agriscience school choice program. I chose to attend this program because I enjoy floral design and as well as other Ag related areas. It is a very fun program to get to expand your knowledge and meet new people. As time goes by you learn a lot about animals, plants, livestock, and landscaping depending on what is your project. My project is mainly working with animals and I have developed excellent organizations skills because of the record book. The record book is used to record the amount of hours you work of activities you done.

There has been something brought to my attention funds have been drastically underfunded for agriculture education. I think that the agriculture education is an excellent choice for those that have an interest in animals, floral design, and other agriculture related topics. The program also opens doors for kids to pursue what they like, compete against others to test their ability, learn skills in areas that may become careers for students in the future. I have been present in the program for about two years now and I have seen the joy that the FFA brings to people's faces. It gives everyone an opportunity and not having adequate funding limits the number of students that can be a part of this program. It isn't fair for them not to experience those things. We all want the good things for our youth's future and not participating is not going to make us successful in that task. I hope to see some changes and some decisions made.

I am writing this letter to encourage you to please urge the appropriations committee to pledge 9million dollars of the school choice funding increases proposed in the governor's budget to the states 19 regional (vo-ag) agriscience programs. Our agriscience programs have been drastically underfunded for over 20 years as compared to the magnet schools, charter schools, vocational technical schools and the other school choice funding programs. (Please see attached flyer with the details)

This will allow hundreds of more students like me to enroll in these successful programs so they will have the same positive experience I am having now. Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,